

Message Text

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PAGE 01 RIO DE 03593 231941Z

70

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DHA-02 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 /072 W

----- 064272

R 231841Z SEP 76

FM AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4169

INFO AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

AMCONSUL SAO PAULO

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE RIO DE JANEIRO 3593

EO 11652: NA

TAGS: PINS, BR

SUBJ: RIO WEEKLY BANNED

1. RIO SATIRICAL WEEKLY PASQUIM EDITION OF SEPTEMBER 17 WAS BANNED BY FEDERAL CENSORSHIP DEPARTMENT APPARENTLY UNDER INSTRUCTIONS FROM JUSTICE MINISTER ARMANDO FALCAO. ACCORDING PRESS REPORTS, POLICE AUTHORITIES WERE ABLE TO SEIZE ABOUT EIGHTY PERCENT OF NINETY-THOUSAND COPIES PRINTED. ONE PASQUIM OFFICIAL ESTIMATED SEIZURE WOULD COST NEWSPAPER IN EXCESS OF HALF-MILLION CRUZEIROS.

2. ANOTHER EDITION OF PASQUIM HAD BEEN BANNED ABOUT ONE YEAR AGO. BRAZILIAN PRESS ASSOCIATION RELEASED NOTE LATE SEPTEMBER 18 ASKING FOR EXPLANATION OF THE DECISION FROM THE JUSTICE MINISTER. SUBSEQUENTLY, FEDERAL POLICE, WHO HAVE RESPONSIBILITY FOR CENSORSHIP, RELEASED BRIEF NOTE EXPLAINING THAT PASQUIM HAD BEEN CENSORED BECAUSE OF DISRESPECTFUL USE OF COLORS OF BRAZILIAN FLAG.

3. COMMENT: BANNED EDITION CONTAINS PASQUIM'S USUAL BLEND OF IRREVERENT LEFT OF CENTER POLITICAL AND NEAR SCATOLOGICAL HUMOR. ALTHOUGH THERE HAS BEEN SOME NERVOUSNESS OF LATE
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PAGE 02 RIO DE 03593 231941Z

IN PRESS CIRCLES IN RIO AND SAO PAULO ABOUT REIMPOSITION OF

PRE-CENSORSHIP, THE GOVERNMENT'S DECISION TO BAN PASQUIM IS APPARENTLY NOT BASED ON SERIOUS POLITICAL OBJECTIONS AND DOES NOT APPEAR TO SIGNAL THE START OF ANY TREND AWAY FROM THE RELATIVE PRESS FREEDOM OF RECENT MONTHS. FACT OF FEDERAL POLICE EXPLANATION ALSO SUGGESTS GOB WANTED TO AVOID JUST SUCH MISINTERPRETATIONS OF ACTION. IN ANY EVENT, NATIONAL PRESS HAS SCARCELY TAKEN NOTICE OF THIS DEVELOPMENT, AND IT UNLIKELY THAT MATTER WILL DEVELOP FURTHER THAN PERFUNCTORY NOTE ISSUED BY PRESS ASSOCIATION. PASQUIM, WHOSE VULGARITY RIVALS ITS OPPOSITION POLITICS, DOES NOT LEND ITSELF AS AN ATTRACTIVE VEHICLE FOR NATIONAL PRESS TO CRITICIZE GOVERNMENT CENSORSHIP POLICIES. AS FOOTNOTE, CONSULATE GENERAL NOTES THAT NEWSPAPER HAWKERS DID BRISK BUSINESS AT RIO BEACHES SEPTEMBER 18 SELLING BANNED EDITION AT EIGHT CRUZEIROS, THREE CRUZEIROS MORE THAN USUAL PRICE. END COMMENT.

4. EMBASSY CONCURS.
DEXTER

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